

REMARKS

Claims 20-23 and 25-28 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 20 and 26-28 are amended and claim 24 is cancelled. Support for the amendments to the claims can be found, for example, on page 35, lines 14-16 of the originally filed specification. No new matter is added.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 24 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. By this amendment, claim 24 claim is cancelled, rendering the rejection moot.

The Office Action rejects claims 20-28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Shomura, U.S. Patent No. 6,170,465, in view of Ishikawa et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,975,934, Mashiki, U.S. Patent No. 6,176,220, and Sugiyama et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,792,901. Claim 24 is cancelled, rendering the rejection thereof moot. The rejection with respect to the remaining claims is respectfully traversed.

Claim 20 recites "injection amount control means for changing a fuel injection amount for a particular one of the cylinders from an injection amount for stoichiometric operation to either an increased amount or a decreased amount and for maintaining a fuel injection amount at stoichiometric operation for cylinders other than the particular cylinder." The Office

Action alleges that Shomura discloses an injection amount control means. However, Shomura's alleged injection amount control means does not maintain a fuel injection amount at a stoichiometric operation for cylinders other than the particular cylinder because Shomura adjusts the fuel injection amount for every cylinder. The remaining references, either alone or in combination, fail to overcome the deficiencies of Shomura because none of the remaining references include disclosure related to an injection amount control means as quoted above.

Claim 26 recites "first injection amount control means for changing the fuel injection amount for a particular one of the cylinders from an injection amount for stoichiometric operation to an increased amount and for maintaining a fuel injection amount at stoichiometric operation for cylinders other than the particular cylinder" and "second injection amount control means, which, when the torque or rotation speed change amount determined by the first computation means is not greater than a predetermined reference value, decreases the fuel injection amount for the particular one of the cylinders from the injection amount for stoichiometric operation and maintains the fuel injection amount at stoichiometric operation for cylinders other than the particular cylinder."

Claim 27 recites "an injection amount control unit for changing a fuel injection amount for a particular one of the cylinders from an injection amount for stoichiometric operation to either an increased amount or a decreased amount and for maintaining a fuel injection amount at stoichiometric operation for cylinders other than the particular cylinder."

Claim 28 recites "a first injection amount control unit for changing the fuel injection amount for a particular one of the cylinders from an injection amount for stoichiometric operation to an increased amount and for maintaining a fuel injection amount at stoichiometric operation for cylinders other than the particular cylinder" and "a second injection amount control unit, which, when the torque or rotation speed change amount determined by the first computation unit is not greater than a predetermined reference value,

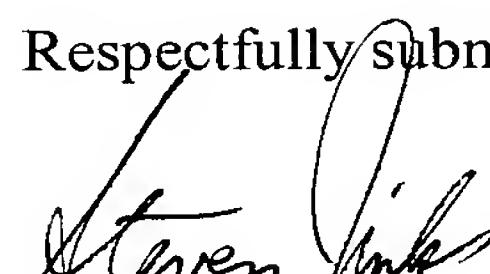
decreases the fuel injection amount for the particular one of the cylinders from the injection amount for stoichiometric operation and maintains the fuel injection amount at stoichiometric operation for cylinders other than the particular cylinder."

Thus, claims 26-28 are patentable at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 20. Further, claims 21-23 are patentable by reason of their dependency from independent claim 20, as well as the additional features they recite. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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